UNIVERSITY
OF NATAL
CASS
DURBAN

EMERGENT STRESS IN THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYS
AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION

Lawrence Schlemmer
Valerie Møller

DOCUMENT AND MEMORANDUM SERIES

Centre for Applied Social Sciences
Sentrum vir Toegepaste Maatskaplike Wetenskappe

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
DURBAN

EMERGENT STRESS IN THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION

Lawrence Schlemmer
Valerie Møller

Centre for Applied Social Sciences
University of Natal
Durban

CONTENTS.

1. INTRODUCTION.

Migrant labour systems, broadly seen, occur under two sets of conditions. The first is where labour recruits from a less-developed region with limited employment opportunity migrate to centres of employment but return due to restrictions on their domicile in the developed region. Another condition is where peasants or subsistence agriculturalists migrate to earn 'target' cash income and return when the target is reached. In the latter the return is voluntary while in the former the return is formally expected.

Under voluntary conditions, authors like Germani[1)] have noted that after target migrants acquire skills, experience, work rewards and familiarity with the urban industrial society they start dispensing with rural values and mobilise to enter the urban workforce on a permanent basis. This is the occupational dimension of the universal process of urbanisation. Where controls are exercised on the migrants' domicile one may expect them to take formal steps in an attempt to become permanently established in the region of their employment. This is the pattern in Europe where a proportion of migrants from less-developed societies attempt to gain immigrant status in order to acquire the citizenship of the receiving country. The opportunities to acquire this permanent status differ from society to society and from time to time, depending inter alia on levels of economic activity.

In situations where the migration occurs across national boundaries the formal limitations on permanent entry are generally accepted as legitimate. Nevertheless, informal means are often adopted to settle in the host country. Hence, in the USA it is estimated that as many as 3 million 'illegal' immigrants work in the economy. (Time Magazine, May 10, 1982.)

In South Africa, both conditions exist in the very large migrant labour force. Target workers are perhaps the classical migrant worker, with no intention of settling permanently in the urban labour force.

---

1) Gino Germani, 'Social Change and Inter-group Conflict' in I.L. Horowitz (ed.), *The New Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964.

Changes have occurred in the sense that intermittent target work has generally given way to permanent oscillation due to the lack of development or opportunity to survive in the sending areas.

The second condition exists in that the Black Urban Areas Act of 1968 ended most formal opportunities for migrants to acquire urban rights or rights to work in the developed areas of South Africa, formerly obtained by working for 15 years in those areas (or for 10 years with one employer).

However, the controls may lack the legitimacy of immigration controls elsewhere. While the sending areas have, in terms of government policy, evolved into self-governing or independent states, the political partition is not generally accepted among black people.[1] Hence, as regards those migrants who wish to dispense with rural orientation and urbanise, a conflict of perceptions exists between the controlling authorities and the would-be permanent urban workers.

Views of the migrant labour system differ widely. In the context of the target worker who wishes to retain a rural base, the system need not appear to be too restrictive since it merely prevents something which the worker does not want anyway. In the context of a would-be urbanite, the system constitutes a rigid control which blocks off important aspirations and needs.

Differences of opinion on the system therefore can depend on which type of migrant is felt to be typical or representative. We would suggest that the system of controls should be evaluated primarily in relation to the blocked would-be urbanite rather than the rurally oriented target worker. A complication arises here, however, if the 'target' work is so frequent and regular that it amounts to a permanent industrial career, from which urban residential rights are rigidly excluded. As we will argue presently, the phenomenon of permanent urban target work among rurally-oriented migrants has become dominant. Therefore we argue that the migrant labour system has imposed (whether partly self-imposed by the migrants or not) the pervasive requirement

---

1) See the report of *The Buthelezi Commission, The Requirements for Stability and Development in KwaZulu and Natal*, Vol. I, Durban: H & H Publications, 1982.

of a divided orientation. While we will also show that widespread adaptation to this divided life has occurred, and indeed is typical of the system today, some important and disturbing consequences flow from it.

This paper sets out to examine in the light of an empirical study, firstly the implications of blocked urbanisation among those migrants for whom the legal controls are constraining. Secondly, it attempts to assess the consequences of adaptation to highly contradictory circumstances. Both sets of implications are evaluated in the context of mounting land-densities and a reduction of rural resources on a per-capita basis.

Before turning to the empirical data, certain of these aspects have to be introduced in greater detail.

1.1 The Adaptive Response Pattern.

The socialisation of the classical oscillating migrant is such that he gradually learns to accept the 'migrant way of life' which essentially consists of adopting a marginally urban lifestyle while in town and reverting to rural customs while in the country. In the course of the migrant career the typical migrant worker will retrace his steps over the bridge linking country and town numerous times, and each time the bridge is crossed he will be required to undertake a shift in behaviour and attitudes in order to cope in the new situation. In terms of role theory a rural migrant entering the industrial workforce thus acquires two sets of complementary roles: an urban and a rural set. According to the stage of the life cycle the two sets will be developed to varying degrees, but at all times of life the two sets remain intact, ready to assume the incumbent as the need arises. Obviously, the mental effort required of migrants to maintain two complete role sets, and the stresses to which they are exposed in this undertaking are enormous. For this reason, some scholars of migration have compared the habit of role-switching among classical migrants to a form of social schizophrenia.

It has been observed that the socialisation process which

every migrant undergoes when first coming to town eases the migrant into acceptance of his dual roles. By the same token the institutionalisation of migrant 'schizophrenia' lends a veneer of 'normality' to an otherwise unusual situation.

There are several mechanisms which tend to insulate the migrant from the constant shock of role exit. Some of these mechanisms may be described as follows:

a) For example, an abnormal situation becomes relatively normal, at least in the statistical sense, if sufficient numbers of individuals are placed in the same situation. Contract workers are frequently recruited in relatively large numbers for labour intensive projects in which case they are immediately surrounded by workers experiencing similar problems of adjustment in an otherwise unfamiliar environment. Migrants typically are accompanied by members of their peer group when they initially set out to seek work. Other migrants find work through contact persons from the home areas who assist them in adjusting to urban circumstances. The peer group and other contact persons help to minimise the cultural shock experienced by rural persons entering the urban social system for the first time and act as support groups while novice industrial workers adjust after temporary loss of their rural roles.

b) In the case of the classical migrant, the peer group continues to provide social company, support and mutual aid in the urban situation. As a result of this attachment to the home group the classical migrant may retain many of his rural values, remain insulated from any wider experience of urban life and only minimally develop his urban role set. In short, he may remain marginal in all of his urban status dimensions. The encapsulation of migrants in home groups is perhaps best known from studies of the prototype of the classical migrant, the 'Red' Xhosa. Mayer[1)] has documented the attitudes of the Red Xhosas who went to greater extremes than other migrants to reject all aspects of urban-industrial culture and participated in the migrant labour system

---

1) Philip Mayer, 'The Origin and Decline of Two Rural Resistance Ideologies' in *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 1-80.

only in order to meet basic material needs. Whilst in town, the Red migrant typically adjusted to western-industrial norms of behaviour only in the work situation. By encapsulating himself in his peer group he managed to reside in town for long periods without ever really exposing himself to urban influences, investing all the rewards from work into developing his position in rural society. Peer group support shielded the classical migrant from the negative effects of the migrant labour system. For example, Red Xhosas did not necessarily consider the menial jobs they held in town as degrading, because they were impervious to urban systems of social prestige ranking. For as long as a migrant remained loyal to his peer group values, self-esteem could be derived exclusively from traditional social categories.

c) The social mechanisms of isolating the migrant from the mainstream of industrial labour are also reinforced in the industrial setting, even to the extent of physical separation in the work and work-related situations. For example,

- some firms recruit new labourers to perform menial jobs mainly through the 'homegroup' network;
- migrant workers typically work in menial jobs which are frequently labour intensive. Hence migrant workers are given few opportunities to interact with other groups of workers whilst on the job;
- until recently, contract workers along with other black workers, have been discouraged from joining trade unions and other worker organisations, thus retarding political integration at the workplace;
- extra-mural activities provided for migrants may differ from those organised by other workers, ostensibly to cater for traditional rural leisure interests. Dance teams are a case in point;
- because migrant workers usually occupy low-status jobs their spending power is limited. This may prevent them from sharing urban leisure pursuits with other urban workers. The fact that the contract worker - at least in theory - must support two households (in town and country) may place a greater strain on his financial resources and restrict integration in the urban pattern of consumption and leisure;

Lastly, and possibly most importantly, the migrant worker is physically separated from the mainstream of urban workers in his housing situation. Contract workers are typically accommodated in single-sex hostels and compounds. This effectively prevents mixing with other urban blacks and facilitates the encapsulation in an exclusively rural-based support group.

These examples serve to illustrate how pervasive the pattern of marginality is which runs through the lives of rural contract migrants working in town. In essence, the migrant labour system and its physical and organisational props are fashioned to meet the needs of the classical target migrant who is in town in his working capacity only, and remains otherwise a country man. Thus, the system works in favour of the industrial worker who by preference remains marginal in all dimensions of urban life despite spending long periods in town, and whose frame of reference is finely attuned to that of his fellow rural migrants.

According to past studies conducted by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences it is evident that large proportions of the contract labour force have been responsive to the conditioning effects of the migrant labour system and this has resulted in passive acceptance of its requirements. It is important to remember that for the classical target migrant this mode of reaction may have had beneficial effects along the lines discussed by authors such as Berg[1] and others. By responding positively to the demands of the migrant labour system, rural migrants may have been able to fulfil most of their needs and those of their families in a relatively short period of time. However, opportunities for migrants to achieve full satisfaction within the framework of the migrant labour system are gradually being eroded.

At this point it may be useful to identify the various factors involved in the achievement of satisfaction and the interaction between these factors. According to gap-theoretical models[2] of pers nal well-being the degree of satisfaction which an individual will express with his life is a function of the gap between aspiration and achievement.

---

1) Elliot J. Berg, 'The Economics of the Migrant Labour System' in Kuper, Hilda (ed.) *Urbanization and Migration in West Africa*, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965, pp. 160-181.

2) Alex C. Michalos, 'Satisfaction and Happiness', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 8, 1980, pp. 385-422.

In a more complex model of well-being, satisfaction is a function of two interacting comparisons, namely of the difference between perceived achievement and aspiration mentioned above and the difference between one's own perceived achievement and that of one's selected reference person. In this more elaborate model of aspiration-achievement gap any number of social comparisons can influence aspirations.

Returning to the question of worker satisfaction in the migrant labour system, one might surmise that the classical migrant worker would be most likely to choose reference standards for his life goals from the repertoire of traditional roles. Thus, reference persons would mainly include a migrant's father and uncles - who were more likely than not also contract workers, members of the home group accompanying him to town, and possibly other contract workers in town. The insulation of the classical migrant's working and living situation in town would automatically focus the choice of reference persons on those most close and similarly situated to himself. Within this very narrow framework of reference it was completely possible for the classical migrant to realise the modest ambitions of his reference standards and to achieve the type of personal development which we shall refer to as 'full', 'higher-level' or 'active' satisfaction in this paper. Moreover, by alternating the positions occupied in the rural and urban role set, the classical migrant could match achievements and aspirations in both sets to his advantage.

By contrast, the circumstances in which contract workers must operate today have generally undermined their opportunities to achieve full satisfaction in either of their two role sets. Changing circumstances have been conducive to raising the aspirations of modern migrants and shifting reference standards away from traditional role models. Changes have occurred in the labour supply as well as in the labour demand situation. And these changes have affected both the achievements and the aspirations of migrants and the resulting gap between the two factors.

By way of illustration the following inter-related changes might be enumerated:

a) <u>The changing land situation.</u> In former days aspirations were

directed toward securing a fertile plot of land which would support the family during the life course. Wage earnings were used to supplement rather than to replace returns from subsistence agriculture. Today, increasing pressure on rural land[1] and on other natural resources through population increase have forced migrants to spend higher proportions of their wage earnings on feeding their families, replenishing tired soil, and paying for services and basic requirements which were formerly gratis.

b) The rising cost of living. The pressure on rural land has effectively increased the cost of living for migrants' families staying behind in the country. At the same time, migrant workers have not been completely insulated from the effects of inflation in the cities. The rising cost of living has forced migrants to raise their expectations regarding wages and benefits. Transport costs have risen more rapidly than other items of expenditure and migrants have responded by limiting their number of home visits and spending holidays in town rather than with their families in the country.

c) Competition in the ranks of labour supply. Caused by such factors as the tightening of labour relations making it more difficult for rural workseekers to enter the city, preferences given in placement of urban blacks, and decreasing economic activity. Adjustment to these factors on the part of contract workers has led to longer workstays. In some cases migrants have been forced to seek work farther away from their rural homes and have not been able to return home as often as in the past. For fear of losing their jobs, some migrant workers have forfeited periodic home visits.

d) The increasing technological sophistication of industrial enterprise has placed higher demands on the skills of migrant workers. It has become essential for unskilled workers to acquire a minimal amount of formal education in order to function successfully in the industrial setting. In some instances literacy training has been provided at the place of work to improve the basic comprehension of workers. On-the-job

---

1) The basic availability of land is the vital factor. In a survey of Durban contract workers conducted by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences in 1976, some 77 percent of the 510 Zulu-speaking respondents stated they would certainly or most probably have land to plough in retirement. In a sample survey of 467 Zulu migrant workers in a rural industry in Natal conducted by the Centre in 1981 only 40 percent expected to have sufficient land to subsist on after their retirement. See also the report of The Buthelezi Commission, *op. cit.*, 1982, Vol. I, p. 235, Table. 5.

training has become essential for workers using increasingly sophisticated tools even in otherwise unskilled jobs. As a result of this trend, the value of education, at least in its instrumental sense, has been generally recognised in migrant circles.[1] No doubt, acceptance of the usefulness of education and on-the-job training has paved the way for acceptance of other 'modern' opportunity structures and has generally widened the spectrum of life goals envisaged by migrants. More importantly, investments in education and training on the part of migrants and employers have also required greater industrial commitment at least during the most productive years of the migrant life course. For instance, the standard practice among classical migrants of finding a leave replacement when periodically returning to subsistence farming gradually fell into disuse during the past decades because labour was no longer fully replaceable. Consequently, labour turnover was reduced substantially and contract workers have remained with the same employer for longer periods of time. Thus, in terms of commitment to industrial work the permanent target worker has become indistinguishable from his counterpart with urban rights.

In summary, changing circumstances affecting commitment to industrial work, opportunities to develop rural roles and exposure to 'modern' values have tended to shift migrant orientations away from the traditional rural setting to the world of work. As a consequence, a wider range of reference standards became available and the gap between achievement and aspirations widened, mainly because aspirations increased rapidly whilst achievements lagged behind or remained static.

Under such circumstances, full satisfaction could theoretically no longer be achieved. However, an inferior type of satisfaction took its place, which, for the want of a more precise concept, we shall refer to as 'passive' or 'lower-level' satisfaction. Superficially seen, 'full' and 'passive' satisfaction are deceptively similar, in that individuals may similarly report satisfaction with their lives, their jobs, etc.

---

1) Mayer notes that over the past decades even the staunchly conservative Red Xhosas have had to make some concessions regarding education in order to improve their chances of obtaining jobs in the modern sector of the economy. (Philip Mayer, 'The Origin and Decline of Two Rural Resistance Ideologies' in *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 1-80.

However, the qualifications of the experiences of well-being call for a clear distinction between the types of satisfaction expressed.

Passive satisfaction, in contrast to 'full' or 'active' satisfaction reflects resignation to a poor life situation: no attempt is made to adjust external circumstances in order to shift achievements towards aspirations. Instead, the relative positions of achievements and aspirations are mentally adjusted to 'artifically' narrow the gap. Alternatively, attempts are made to underemphasise or deny that a gap between achievement and aspiration exists.

Whilst this type of exercise in acquiescence only leads to minimal satisfaction (in the sense that aspiration-level may be reduced to expectation-level), it also prevents dissatisfaction. Most importantly it is a face-saving solution for migrants who have no resources, such as education, job skills or even physical strength, to enable them to become mobile in the urban-industrial situation, and who due to the changing circumstances described above, have no resources to fall back on in the rural areas. Adaptation is also characteristic of those whose personal disposition does not allow them to place the blame for their personal misfortune on external agents.[1] Thus, whilst 'modern' migrants may, superficially seen, appear to be just as satisfied as their classical counterparts, their participation in the migrant labour system in terms of their overall well-being, may be far from satisfactory.

Adaptation to the migrant labour system which results in only minimal satisfaction may assume any of the following three typical response patterns:

a) Conformism: The conformist is characterised by his acceptance of his marginal position in the urban situation. He may seek to rationalize his situation, either by lowering his aspirations to match realistic expectations of job rewards, or by inflating actual progress made in order to narrow the aspiration-achievement gap. In the course of the working career, aspirations for job mobility may be relinquished in order to cling to 'safe options' until retirement age. The conformist is by and large a victim of habit:

---

1) Reference is made here to the 'intropunitive' type of individual. By contrast, the 'extrapunitive' individual would be more likely to explain his poor situation in terms of external causes. This type of reasoning would result in dissatisfaction more characteristic of the 'alienated' and 'innovative' responses described below rather than the minimal satisfaction described here.

in the course of his career he grows accustomed to his work environment and the constraints of the migrant labour system. He is grateful for the limited opportunities afforded to him in the system and feels he is making the best of his life under the given circumstances. Alternatively, he may derive minimal satisfaction from his role as martyr of the system for the sake of his family.

b) Retreatism: The retreatist typically escapes from the pressures of the real world by transposing his situation into another more pleasant world. He resorts to daydreams of the good life in order to maintain his identity and personal integrity under adverse circumstances. The 'rural dream' so common among labour migrants is a source of morale which enables him to cope with the trials of everyday life in town. In the rural dream, the migrant is capable of relinquishing his urban role set and assuming a balanced social position in the rural home community. The classical migrant was observed to spend much of his leisure time indulging in rural fantasies in the company of members of his home group. Upon his return to his place of origin the rural dream became reality for the classical migrant. By contrast, changing rural circumstances, for instance land pressure, more extensive basic needs, and the higher cost of living, have condemned the 'modern' retreatist to become a permanent target worker whose rural dream may never come true. The 'modern' migrant may even lack the resources to develop his urban position which would allow him to return-migrate to his home community. However, as long as the retreatist clings to his dream, he is spared the sense of hopelessness and disillusion which would set in if he were to lose sight of his target in life or if his rural return proved a failure.

c) Alienation is a rather more extreme type of response to the migrant labour system. Although dissatisfaction with the system may initially be intensely felt, dissatisfaction later gives way to a sense of hopelessness. There is little belief in things improving in future and despair sets in. Lack of social resources may increase the likelihood of migrants becoming alienated. For example, lack of formal education and loss of physical strength with increasing age may gradually lead a migrant to adopting this response pattern. Life is seen as a continuous struggle to make ends meet and there is little hope of ever escaping from the drudgery of work life. Persons in this category typically do not feel they have made progress in work nor do they expect things to improve for them in future. Clearly, this type of response reflects the lowest threshold of satisfaction discussed so far. It is the element of passivity masking the underlying dissatisfaction, rather than the element

of satisfaction which is the chief characteristic of the alienated response. This suggests that alienation is more appropriately ordered under the heading of adaptive rather than non-acquiescent responses (discussed below) to the migrant labour system.

1976 Data[1] collected by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences suggest that the larger majority, some 80 percent of labour migrants, are adaptive in the sense of falling into any one of above three categories.

1.2 The Non-acquiescent Response Pattern.

The 1976 Data referred to above and data collected for the Buthelezi Commission in 1981 show relatively small proportions of migrant workers falling outside the three categories of acquiescence. While the percentage may be small, absolute numbers in this category are substantial due to the large size of the migrant labour force. Moreover, changes referred to would be likely to increase non-acquiescence considerably from now on. One can identify the non-acquiescent as an 'innovator'.

The innovator. In the literature on migration, the out-migrant is frequently portrayed as an innovator,[2] that is, as a person who reacts to the lack of opportunity for mobility in the rural context by actively seeking to improve his position in the more developed sector of the economy. The proposition that migration is selective, for which empirical evidence is abundantly available, suggests that migrants may be more resourceful than others who stay behind in the rural areas. This in turn should increase their tendency to remain innovators in the area of destination.

---

1) Valerie Møller and Lawrence Schlemmer, *Contract Workers and Job Satisfaction*, Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Natal, Durban, 1981.

2) Reference is made here to conditions of 'voluntary' emigration only. Although 'push' factors, such as rural poverty, propelling the individual to emigrate from the rural areas, may be so dominant as to virtually eliminate choice, decision-making regarding the timing of the rural departure is still the prerogative of the individual. For this reason it is more correct to speak of 'voluntary' rather than 'involuntary' emigration. The major focus of this paper is on the condition of 'involuntary' return migration and restrictions on immigration.

Under changing circumstances described above the portrayal of the 'modern' migrant as a typical innovator is a complete misrepresentation of the facts.

Firstly, *selective* migration has given way to *mass* migration. Virtually the entire adult male population in the rural areas is forced to emigrate due to economic hardship.

Secondly, and most importantly, the migrant's innovative spirit is systematically broken in the course of his working career. The regulations which rigidly structure all facets of a migrant's life in town leave little leeway for personal initiative. The mechanisms described in Section 1.1 which reinforce the marginal position of migrants in all urban status dimensions are particularly effective in this regard.

Thus, innovators tend to be the exception rather than the rule among 'modern' migrants. Nevertheless, in a small percentage of cases contract workers will manage to remain innovators for longer periods of their working lives by continuously seeking to improve achievements despite rising aspirations.

Consider the possibilities for migrant 'mobilisation', to use Germani's concept for innovation. In order to initially emancipate from his totally marginal position, an individual requires at least one slightly higher position in his role repertoire on which to hang his hopes for successive improvement of the remainder of positions occupied in urban society.[1)]

Past research[2)] suggests that unless a migrant is equipped with a particular advantage from the outset, he will not be able to move from his marginal urban position. Given such an advantage, the likelihood of an innovative reaction to marginality is increased. Past observations indicate that innovative activity may focus on the development of either of the two role sets, the urban or the rural, depending upon the stage of the life cycle

---

1) When depicting marginality as a function of a multiplicity of low-ranking positions held in society we are following Germani. (Gino Germani, *Marginality,* New Brunswick N.J.: Transaction Books, 1980.

2) cf. V. Møller, L. Schlemmer, *Contract Workers and Job Satisfaction, op. cit.,* 1981.

and the type of resource at the migrant's command. Closure of the aspiration-achievement gap is typically sought in the urban context earlier on in the working career; this is particularly the case if the migrant possesses above-average educational qualifications. At a later stage in life the more successful migrants will seek to return-migrate in order to occupy higher ranking positions in rural society. Theoretically at least, innovators stand to realise the rural dream and achieve full satisfaction as prosperous and influential members of the rural home community.

It is important to note that full satisfaction may also be achieved in town as long as personal initiative results in successive closure of the aspiration-achievement gap, that is, as long as the migrant can realise some of his potential for individual mobilisation. If this is the case, discontent with the migrant labour system will be contained until such time as the individual migrant has reached a sufficiently powerful position from which he is able to redress any grievances experienced whilst participating in the system. Thus, discontent among innovators is most likely to occur only in mid-career and even at this stage the innovator may be capable of and also prefer to shift his activities to the rural context in order to achieve full satisfaction there. In his choice of a rural strategy to contain urban grievances, the innovator may be compared to his forerunner, the classical target migrant who voluntarily return-migrated in the prime of life. As long as the rural economy can absorb the 'drop-outs' from the migrant labour system, the system itself will not be affected. However, if the absorption capacity of the rural economy is reduced, the discontent of innovating migrants may turn against the migrant labour system. Faced with blocked opportunities in the urban situation and no rural line of escape mobilising migrants will be more likely to experience acute dissatisfaction than others.

Consider the situation of those migrants who, by virtue of the resources they have brought with them when entering the migrant labour system, have enjoyed some degree of job mobility. These migrants may experience job satisfaction at a relatively high level (in comparison to the 'conformists' who experience only lower-level satisfaction) which they cannot translate into socially acceptable or legally permissible signs of success. By choice or by force of circumstances they may not consider premature retirement from the migrant labour system, yet they cannot develop along any other dimensions of their urban role set. In this situation they are condemned to lifelong marginality. Even their main source of urban-based self-esteem, job satisfaction, may be of limited duration due to rising aspirations.

Under these circumstances, the innovator, unlike the acquiescent will be more likely not only to feel but also to express anger and dissatisfaction with his marginal position in society and to act accordingly.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study.

In order to study the response patterns of non-acquiescent types of migrants, a survey of contract workers was undertaken who had shown initiative in seeking to alter their marginal position in town. For this purpose a sample was drawn of male migrants who were no longer living in single-sex hostels or who indicated aspirations to seek alternative accommodation. This type of behaviour was interpreted as an innovative response to the migrant labour system.

When initially planning the survey, it was not known if extra-hostel domicile represented a 'lead' or a 'lag' factor in the mobilisation process.

— Assuming domicile was a 'lead' factor, migrants would leave the hostel by way of a first attempt to overcome the constraints of migrancy. One might expect that once residential restrictions were overcome, further barriers obstructing progress in other dimensions of urban life would be more keenly felt. This would call for further innovative action.

— Alternatively, in the case of domicile being a 'lag' factor, mobilising migrants may have sought extra-hostel domicile in order to make their residential circumstances more compatible with their other status designations. Change of domicile would therefore follow as a consequence of earlier innovative acts.

Therefore if we were to use domicile as the sample inclusion criterion, we might be studying novice or seasoned innovators dependent on domicile being the 'lead' or the 'lag' factor. Nevertheless, domicile was considered an appropriate test variable for distinguishing between atypical and classical target migrants. Following the discussion above signs of stress in the migrant labour system would be most evident in such a modernising group.

2. STUDY DESIGN.

This represented an extremely challenging fieldwork task. Non-acquiescent or mobilising migrants are in actual or potential conflict with influx control requirements or residential regulations in townships and white suburbs. They are the least likely category of people to find willing to be interviewed.

For these very same reasons no frame or list of such people is available from which a sample can be drawn. Hence the sampling procedure could only be to approach large numbers of black workers, and by a process of elimination, arrive at people who matched certain requirements. These were:

1) people in hostels who wished to find alternative accommodation in townships;
2) those migrant contract workers accommodated in townships as lodgers (and who in terms of township regulations are usually 'illegally' domiciled);
3) migrant contract workers who had found alternative accommodation in informal shack settlements; and
4) a control group of randomly selected migrants of a typical kind living in hostel accommodation.

The overall sample size was 478 with a control of 198. In view of the unknown universe no estimates of the total estimated size of the residentially non-acquiescent migrant population can be made.

A detailed breakdown of sampling characteristics is given in Appendix I. These characteristics also cannot be verified against figures for a universe. It has to be accepted that this sample represents a cross-section of residentially non-acquiescent migrants, and that estimates derived from our data are not precise but indicative.

The fieldwork was carried out by the black interviewing team of IMS (Pty) Ltd., a long-established commercial research organisation with which the Centre for Applied Social Sciences has cooperated for more than ten years, with very good results. The fieldworkers are

highly-trained full-time permanent staff, are multi-lingual and have become accustomed to conducting complex interviews and ones which deal with fairly controversial issues.

3. THE RESULTS : THE BASIC CONDITION.

3.1 Problems of Survival.

In approaching this descriptive analysis of non-acquiescent migrants we have to first consider their basic situation, both in objective and perceptual terms. The dominant consideration here is the material circumstances of the migrants. Almost by definition a migrant worker from rural areas is someone whose circumstances propel him to seek a material complement to his subsistence base by working in the city — hardly anywhere is rural subsistence agriculture sufficiently productive to remove the need for urban employment. In this section, then, we have to briefly consider both "poles" of survival, the rural and the urban.

In these results and all those following we will refer to shack dwellers as "shacks" for the sake of brevity. Hostel dwellers seeking alternative accommodation will be called "temporary hostels", and those people living in townships will be termed "lodgers" since that is their most common status.

3.1.1 Adequacy of Rural Subsistence.

An indication of the inadequacy of subsistence is gained from a question asked only among respondents who currently have land (see later analysis). We asked *"In a year which is not too wet and not too dry, do you have to buy maize for the family at home to eat?"* The proportions indicating that their yields were inadequate were as follows:

	Lodgers (n 23)	Shacks (n 43)	Temporary hostels (n 33)	Total (n 99)	Controls (n 39)
Additional maize purchases needed	74%	65%	63%	67%	69%

Because we are considering a sub-category of people with land our sample bases are very small. It is no more than suggestive, therefore, that the group of persons who have penetrated most deeply into the urban structure (i.e. lodgers in townships) are the ones with the least adequate subsistence base in rural areas. However, what is clear is that even among those with land, it is a general condition among a clear majority of all migrants that additional earnings are an absolute necessity. This is not to say that where people have land they do not intend to at least try to utilise it; 62 percent of the non-acquiescent migrants and as many as 75 percent of the control group intend to use the land for crop production. These results no more than confirm the situation of inadequacy of rural subsistence agriculture.

3.1.2 Circumstances in the Urban Economy.

The circumstances of the migrants in the urban economy are therefore critical in determining their level of welfare. In our samples, among those employed, the median monthly income among our non-acquiescent migrants was R178, comparing with R165 per month among the control group of regular hostel migrants. While there is a significant difference, we should not make too much of it except to say that non-acquiescent migrants on average are certainly not worse off than the regular migrants in terms of wage and salary benefits, and in fact may be above average.

Employment circumstances are similar among the non-acquiescent and the control groups with 43 percent of the former and 46 percent of the latter group working in menial or unskilled jobs. However, there is one exception in this pattern of employment. A significantly higher proportion of lodgers than other non-acquiescents, possibly for seniority reasons, have managed to work their way into routine non-manual jobs and jobs requiring skills of varying degrees.

Mainly due to the job mobility of the lodgers in the non-acquiescent group, atypical migrants dominate in the higher skilled jobs, while significantly higher proportions of the control group hold routine-non-manual jobs. The picture emerges as follows:

	Lodgers (n 125)*	Shacks (n 203)	Temporary hostels (n 150)	Total (n 478)	Controls (n 198)
Menial/unskilled manual	26%	46%	53%	43%	40%
Routine non-manual	25	13	14	17	29
Semi-skilled/skilled/white-collar	48	39	32	39	24

It is clear, therefore, that the non-acquiescent migrants enjoy greater occupational success. This could no doubt partly be accounted for by higher educational achievements, yet this is not the case as appears in the results below.

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
No schooling	23%	22%	18%	21%	25%
Sub A to Std. 5	48	57	56	54	49
Std. 6 or higher	28	20	26	24	24

In terms of numbers of years spent in the urban areas, the pattern of results is as follows:

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Up to 5 years	25%	34%	34%	32%	41%
5 to 10 years	19	20	28	22	19
10 years or more	55	44	38	45	38

Here we obtain an insight into at least one of the important factors accounting for non-acquiescence. The lodgers and shack-dwellers, in that order, have been longer in town than our regular migrants, and their deviation from expected migrant behaviour is probably partly a function of the process of mobilising to become urban men.

---

* These sample bases are applicable to all subsequent results unless otherwise specified.

Despite the higher occupational achievements of the non-acquiescent group the rate of current unemployment is significantly higher than among regular migrant controls.

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Unemployed currently	21%	23%	13%	19%	5%

This may appear contradictory but it is in fact a function of cross-pressures generated by the economic and the legal system. A migrant worker is not supposed to be unemployed in town; he is expected to return to his rural area and seek work at an appropriate rural labour bureaux. However, this cuts him off from the chance of actively seeking work himself or from seeking work of his choice. Therefore, unemployed migrants are likely to try to remain in town. This is easier outside of the hostel situation where regular checks are carried out. Hence, ironically, the attempts to regulate the lives of unemployed migrants in town may be encouraging non-acquiescent behaviour in the sense of forcing them to establish themselves outside of the sphere of regulation in the hostels.

Despite very rigorous control in the urban areas, some unemployed migrants evade detection for considerable periods as the following results show:

	Lodgers (n 27)	Shacks (n 47)	Temporary hostels (n 20)	Total (n 94)	Controls (n 10)
Workseekers for over 1 year and still unemployed	11%	21%	-	13%	-

Obviously the shack areas are the refuge of people caught in the cross-pressures referred to above for more than a few months. This is but one indication of the function of shack areas in our economy at the present time.

The non-acquiescent migrants have good reason for a commitment to urban wage-income. They tend, on average to have a higher burden of dependency than the regular migrant controls:

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Dependents -					
3 or more adults	56%	65%	56%	60%	41%
3 or more children	60	61	64	62	64

These results suggest strongly that while non-acquiescent migrants have roughly the same dependency burden as controls in terms of children, their more complex circumstances (see later) have created a more complex burden of dependency as regards adults.

This issue leads immediately to the question of the stress of basic survival. This will be dealt with again in more detail in due course, but it is necessary to consider the following results at this point.

TABLE 1. Proportions of Migrants indicating that they *"worry very much"* about issues connected with material survival.[1)]

Worry very much about:	Lodgers (n 62)	Shacks (n 103)	Temporary hostels (n 74)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 98)
Not sending enough money home	74%	67%	74%	71%	77%
Failing health and earnings	51	52	45	50	48
Losing job	66	56	51	57	57
Debt repayment	74	65	70	69	63
Insufficient food at home	64	64	70	66	68
Savings	64	75	68	70	61

The results in Table 1 indicate that while in some cases the non-acquiescent migrants show a slightly lower level of concern, across the range of material anxieties the pattern for regular and non-acquiescent migrants is broadly similar: both groups reveal, in terms of their own subjective accounts, extraordinarily high levels of worry about material survival.

---

1) The question read: *"Everybody worries about things in their lives, but some things are more worrying than others. What do you worry about most? I'm going to read to you some things and I'd like you to tell me if you worried very much or just a little or not at all about these things in your life during the past year."*

These data show to what extent our migrant labour system has changed from the very early 'classical' pattern of subsistence peasants turning to the urban economy in order to augment resources through target work. Today the majority work for survival, not simply to attain a target of 'additional' welfare.

3.2 Adaptive Responses.

In the introduction to this analysis, mention is made of the surprisingly extensive acceptance by migrant workers generally of the regulations and constraints in the migrant labour system. Life-long workers in the urban areas seem to acquiesce to the formal expectation that their ultimate commitments should be to return to rural areas and that they will not wish to accumulate resources in urban areas.

As already indicated in this study the intention is to identify major categories of migrants who deviate from these expectations by selecting irregular forms of residence in the city. Our samples hence are in one basic respect, the residential aspect, maladaptive to the formal system. These non-conforming behaviours or intentions would suggest that less acquiescence to other aspects of the migrant labour pattern would exist. Against this expectation, however, we must also weigh the fact that the system is very deeply-entrenched relative to the power of migrants to change it. How far do our non-conforming migrants go in rejecting the formal expectations?

We assessed the adaptive conformism of our samples in a variety of different ways, by means of the attitudinal items in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Acceptance - non-acceptance of Temporary Status in Town.

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Reasons for urban work vs. farming:					
Rejection of farming after completing urban work or indication of intention to settle permanently in town.[1]	8% (n 62)	20% (n 103)	16% (n 74)	15% (n 239)	13% (n 98)
Not unhappy to leave wife back in rural area, for various reasons.[2]	48 (n 56)	51 (n 80)	37 (n 89)	44 (n 225)	42 (n 120)
Agreement with statements:					
"African contract workers would be wise not to wish their wives to join them to live in the city."	34 (n 63)	42 (n 100)	43 (n 76)	40 (n 239)	46 (n 100)
"African contract workers are more fortunate than township Africans because they can get away from the white man's world if they wish."	65 (n 63)	63 (n 100)	60 (n 76)	62 (n 239)	58 (n 100)

From the results to the first item in Table 2 we note that committed "urbanisers" are a small minority in all sampling categories. The highest proportion we find is one-fifth among our shack-dwelling migrants. The second and third attitudinal items show, however, that minorities, albeit substantial of over four out of ten, find difficulty in accepting the divisions in family life which the system creates. The final item in the Table shows a majority in all categories evincing ambivalence about the urban environment.

---

1) The question read: *"Why are you working in town and not farming? What is your most important reason, and your next most important reason?"*

2) The question read: *"Do you feel very unhappy about leaving your wife on her own or do you feel not so unhappy because you are used to leaving your wife, there are people to look after her and she cares for your property in the rural area?"*

What is significant here is the relatively small and insignificant differences between our residentially non-conforming migrants and the control group of regular hostel dwellers. It would suggest that residential non-conformism is specific to the dwelling situation and that normative rejection of the system is not necessarily involved. Normative acceptance or rejection is roughly equally distributed among residential non-conformists and conformists alike.

This means that one should look more closely at residential "non-conformism". We put the following attitude statement to the respondents and the results were as follows:

	Lodgers	Shack	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
"For African contract workers staying in a hostel is the best way of living in the city" - Agreement	36% (n 63)	18% (n 100)	19% (n 76)	23% (n 239)	43% (n 100)

It is clear that there is no clear polarisation in orientation between our hostel and "non-conforming" categories. In no group does a majority value the hostel situation, and conversely, there are minorities in the non-conforming groups particularly among lodgers in townships, who appreciate the hostel situation.

One of the joys of empirical research is that on occasions the data themselves demolish a conceptual framework. This is the case here. Residential orientation among migrant workers seems to be a combination of pragmatic and attitudinal factors. It is not a clear-cut "lead" factor in the process of mobilising for urbanisation. This means that among regular contract workers in hostels some of the attitudes and orientation to urbanise permanently could exist almost as strongly as they do among residential non-conformists. Put alternatively, one might say that the pervasive effects of a total framework of legal controls on urbanisation constrain the orientations of residential non-conformists and conformists alike.

We are satisfied, however, that the residentially non-conforming migrants have a social situation in which they are less

encapsulated than hostel migrants and that they therefore represent an important group to study when identifying elements in the rejection of the migrant worker system. We will proceed in the analysis from this point by considering not only the residential categories employed in stratifying the sample but will also consider other characteristics which might be more powerful in encouraging acceptance or rejection of the constraints on urbanisation.

3.3 Rural Resources as a Basic Factor.

The most fundamental resource is land for cultivation. Respondents were questioned in detail about the availability of land for "farming" (this would exclude garden plots). The results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Distribution of Land Resources or Expected Resources.

	Lodgers	Shack	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Have own land	28%	22%	20%	23%	27%
Lease own land	7	7	1	5	7
Share land	6	12	12	11	10
Expect own land	23	22	37	27	18
Expect shared land	2	3	6	4	2
No land or expectations of land	31 (n 125)	31 (n 203)	22 (n 150)	28 (n 478)	36 (n 198)

Access to land and anticipated access are unexpectedly similar among the non-acquiescent respondents and the control group. The two groups differ mainly in terms of their expectations of land, in particular the temporary hostel respondents. Possibly this result reflects the relatively high aspirations of the non-conforming group, which as we already know, is occupationally and educationally more successful and therefore might anticipate purchasing land. They may anticipate buying their way to a resolution of their problems.

Needless to say, these expectations may be unrealistic in the light of mounting land densities in black rural areas and the cost

1) Information elicited by the following questions: *"Do you have land for farming in the country? If yes, is it shared/your own land/ leased? If no, will you have land for farming when you are older? Will it be shared/your own land/leased?"*

of land if freehold title is introduced in rural areas, which is widely contemplated.

What these results tell us in very general terms is that the proportion of migrants in all our categories with either no land or no expectations of acquiring land is rather high. Among the control group it is over one-third, and approaches one-third in two of the non-conforming groups. It is likely to rise well above these figures in the reality of future circumstances. To some extent the respondents anticipate this; the following and the proportions with land or expectations of land who are not certain about being able to retain their land:

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Uncertainty about retaining land	4%	8%	18%	10%	9%

The results above for temporary hostel dwellers, who appear more optimistic in the results in Table 3, tend to reduce the optimism for the future which this group evinces, bringing them broadly into line with the other groups.

This category of people without the most fundamental of resources in the rural areas, to which they are permanently committed in terms of law, is obviously a pointer to the major emerging weakness in the migrant labour system as it operates at present. The implications of this factor must be carefully considered in assessing our empirical results. To this we must add the evidence from our earlier finding that two-thirds of respondents with land at present considered it unsuitable to maintain family subsistence.

This brings us to a more general assessment of rural resources. We asked our respondents to give two reasons *"why they were working in town and not farming?"* Among the reasons[1)] the following relate to the adequacy of the rural resource base:

---

1) Fixed options: Prefer to work in town/do not like farming; wages are better in town; have settled permanently in town; can't earn or produce enough to survive in the rural area; all men of my age work in town; people respect men who work in town; am working only to earn money - will go back to farm later; no land or not enough land.

	Lodgers (n 62)	Shacks (n 103)	Temporary hostels (n 74)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 98)
Cannot earn or produce sufficient to survive	40%	25%	28%	30%	32%
Insufficient land	24	21	17	20	30

In terms of this answer set, at any rate, over 50 percent of the non-conformists and over 60 percent of the controls perceive themselves to be "pushed" into migrant work by the inadequacy of the rural economy. Most of the other answers not reported above referred to earnings in the cities and hence could include the economic "push" factors in the rural areas.

What is notable is that the non-conformist groups are less likely to perceive themselves as pushed out of the rural areas by economic circumstances. These results bear out our earlier interim conclusion that we cannot say that the residentially non-conforming groups are fundamentally much more predisposed to urbanise than the regular migrants. If problems exist in the overall coherence of the system, these problems, in the main, apply equally to the regular hostel migrants and the residentially non-conforming groups.

3.4 The "Maladaptive" Migrant.

The use of the word "maladaptive" in the heading to this section bears no moral connotation whatsoever. The term refers simply to those migrants, in whatever social or residential category, who indicate that they are at odds with the system of regulated temporary access to urban industrial employment. From the point of view of their own circumstances they may indeed be showing adaptive capacities by not being willing to conform to a system which ill fits their circumstances.

In this section we seek to identify the proportions of migrants who, quite aside from their residential behaviour, appear to be "mobilising", attitudinally or otherwise, to break with the system. We asked our respondents where they expected to be domiciled after ceasing to work. The results appear in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Place of Domicile after Retirement. [1)]

	Lodgers (n 63)	Shacks (n 100)	Temporary hostels (n 76)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 100)
Rural homeland	79%	69%	81%	75%	86%
City township	19	17	14	16	12
Peri-urban squatter area	1	4	-	2	1
Uncertain	-	8	2	4	1
White farm	-	2	1	1	-

From these results it seems that the migrant system has indeed pervaded the consciousness of the respondents, because the extent of the intention to return to rural areas is high. Yet, in another sense, given the large absolute size of the migrant labour force, the fact that the non-hostel migrants (non controls) contain up to one-quarter which does not wish to return to the rural homeland is a substantial "maladaptive" phenomenon in terms of sheer numbers.

Which are the groups least likely to be adaptive? The following are categories in which the proportions wishing to retire to a city township or peri-urban area are above average:

---

1) The question read: *"Where will you live when you are too old to work? Will this be in a city township, rural homeland, peri-urban squatter area, white farm?"*

Retirement in urban/peri-urban area.

Average - all groups	17%
Ciskei-Xhosa	25
Pedi	35
Pretoria migrants	48
Unemployed	27
No land	38
Family nearby	32

These results generally suggest that the issue of rural resources is vital. The Ciskei, for example, is well-known to be severely overcrowded. The Pedi-speaking migrants and the Pretoria migrants generally contain high proportions of people who have been displaced from a Tswana state (Bophuthatswana) and have inadequate access to rural resources as a consequence. The result for the category of people with no land speaks for itself. The unemployed group may contain a higher than average proportion of a kind of lumpenproletariat — people who have shallow social roots in any area and who tend to live in squatter areas. The high proportion in the category of people who have brought wives and family to live near them may be a tautology — because they have no rural base their families have perforce to move into the city.

The same basic issue was tapped at an attitudinal level. We asked people to give a description of themselves in terms relevant to the urban-rural continuum[1]. The following are the proportions *"feeling themselves to be"* (inter-alia):

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
"A person whose life and future is in the city"	12%	14%	7%	11%	11%
"A person who is changing from a rural person to a city person"	10	17	16	15	13
Total of categories above	22	31	23	26	24

A similar item asked the respondents whether they *"had"* or *"had ever felt like" "leaving their land in the country and living in town as townspeople for the rest of their lives"*[2].

---

1) The question read: *"Which of the following do you feel yourself to be? A person who is fully of the city whose life and future is in the city; a person whose real place is in the rural area but who has to work in the city; a person who is changing from a rural person to being a city person."*

2) The question read: *People sometimes think of leaving their land in the country for others to use, and living in town as townspeople for the rest of their lives. Do you ever feel like doing this or have you done it?"*

The following are the proportions giving affirmative responses.

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
"feels like leaving land to live as townsperson"	19%	28%	17%	22%	17%
"has left land to live as townsperson"	4	9	4	6	3
Total of above	23	37	21	28	20

On this item the residential non-conformists are slightly more urban-oriented than the regular hostel migrants. Broadly, however, the two items suggest that overall roughly one-quarter have an urban-orientation in terms of their attitudes. This attitude is most prevalent among shack-dwelling migrants on both items; the proportions being above 30 percent.

The following are groups whose endorsement of either of the item pairs above is higher than average for the sample.

	Townsperson	Thoughts of relinquishing land
Sample average	26%	27%
Ciskei-Xhosa	38	not above average
South Sothos	40	44
Pedis	40	not above average
Pretoria migrants	35	45
Unemployed	36	not above average
Std. 6/7/8 +	36	34
White-collar	not above average	42
No land or expectations	47	44
Family nearby	35	43
Ex white farm	37	not above average
Those who think they can survive on savings or pensions	31	not above average
Under R75 per month income	38	34

Here again many of the patterns in the data relate back to the rural land base. The areas in which land is least adequate (e.g. South Sothos or Pedis near Pretoria) and those without land appear to be adopting attitudes supportive of a break with the system. Surprisingly,

those with low income or who are unemployed reveal relatively greater desire to stay in town permanently. This would counter any thought that by insisting on a job as a precondition for rights to be in the city the authorities will discourage urban drift.

We have identified roughly one-quarter or more of our total migrant group which in various ways indicate deviation from the classical migrant pattern of rural identification. In our introduction we referred to these people as "mobilising", thereby denoting the start of a process. This process occurs, as we have said, within a framework of pervasive legal constraints. It is of interest to note, therefore, what proportions in our sample may have completed the process, as it were, to become fully urban in outlook. We knew that it must be a small proportion, but given the absolute size of the migrant labour force, even a small proportion can produce large numbers of people and very substantial stresses in the system of constraints on urbanisation.

We take three indices of the "completed" process of mobilisation. Firstly, those who in response to a question on the most important reason for *"working in town and not farming"* indicated that they had *"settled permanently in town"*.

	Lodgers (n 62)	Shacks (n 103)	Temporary hostels (n 74)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 98)
"Settled permanently in town"	4%	10%	6%	7%	5%

Secondly we took as indicator a group indicating that they would *"not prefer to work in the country at all, even if a higher-paying job were available"*:[1)]

	Lodgers (n 125)	Shacks (n 203)	Temporary hostels (n 150)	Total (n 478)	Controls (n 178)
Intrinsic preference for urban work	14%	14%	7%	12%	12%

In the third place we took a group of people who indicated that either the urban area or the peri-urban shack area was *"their real home"*.[2)]

1) The question read: *"Would you prefer to work closer to your place in the country if there was a job which paid: half your present wages; a little less than your present wages; as much as you earn in your present job; only if earned more than in present job; would not prefer to work in the country at all?"*

2) The question read: *"Where is your real home now? Not just the place where you live or the place where many of your family might be, but the place you feel to be your real home now?"*

	Lodgers (n 125)	Shacks (n 203)	Temporary hostels (n 150)	Total (n 578)	Controls (n 198)
Real home in city or peri-urban area	22%	29%	14%	23%	15%

Here again we note that on indices 1 and 3 there are marginal to substantial differences between the residentially non-conformist migrants and the hostel-dwelling regular migrants, but, more broadly, that there is no clear polarisation between the non-conformists and the controls.

Scanning our data to identify the factors which correlate with these indices of urban commitment, we find the following groups for which the "urban" endorsement is well above the sample average:

	"Have settled permanently in town"	"Prefer urban work under all conditions"	"City is real home"
Sample average	7%	12%	21%
Ciskei/Xhosa	18	not above average	35
Pedi	16	not above average	26
South Sotho	not above average	not above average	43
Pretoria migrants	14	not above average	31
Durban migrants	12	not above average	31
White-collar work	10	17	not above average
Squatter area home	40	30	n.a.
35 to 44 years	12	not above average	not above average
Under R75 p.m.	17	24	not above average
Unemployed	12	not above average	not above average
Std. 6/7	12	not above average	not above average
Std. 8	not above average	not above average	39
Family nearby	not above average	19	37
No land or expectation	13	19	40
White farm origin	14	17	not above average

Once again we see the same broad range of factors appearing to relate to urban-rural identification. These are primarily factors which concern either the rural land availability or educational and occupational factors.

The main point to be made at this stage is that if an urban orientation is encouraged by a lack of rural resources or educational and occupational mobility, as would appear to be the case, then the migrant labour system will produce a growing minority which is poorly adapted to the constraints in the system.

3.5 Stress Factors: Maintaining Family Coherence.

We turn now to an issue which is perhaps one of the more fundamental concerns among commentations on the migrant labour system. Broadly stated we refer here to the extent to which the system produces personal stress because of the separation of migrant workers from their families.

In Table 5 below we present the proportions of people who have, or would like to have their wives (primary wives, not concubines) and/or children living with them or near to them in the cities.

TABLE 5. Migrants who have or would like to have their (primary) wives and/or children with or close to them in town, married persons only.[1)]

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Have wife (and children) in city or fringe area	39%	43%	13%	33%	1%
Desire to have wife nearby	28	19	42	29	38
Total rejecting separation	67	62	55	62	39

Here we see a differentiation of a major kind between the residentially conformist and non-conformist migrants. The migrants who have taken the step of bringing their wives to live with or near them are clearly clustered in the lodger and shack-dweller categories. We cannot say whether the search for a family base in the cities is the causative factor in leading to residential non-conformity, but these results are certainly suggestive.

Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that as far as one can ascertain in a survey, the wives referred to in the Table were not casual

1) Information elicited by the questions: *"The men we are interviewing have many different kinds of family arrangements. For each of these please tell me whether or not it fits your circumstances?* Options: Married with wife (and children) in shack area not far from here; married living with wife (and children) in township; married living with second wife (and children) in shack area/in city or township. *"Would a man like you wish to bring his wife and children to live with him in town or not?"*

girlfriends, concubines or mistresses. If we were to add second "marriages" and "pot wives" to the proportions in the Table we would account perhaps for a majority of the non-conforming migrants.

The results almost suggest a continuum running from regular hostel migrants, through hostel migrants wishing for other accommodation, through to lodgers and shack-dwellers, in the extent to which formal conventions are rejected. These results also suggest that as long as there is prohibition on migrants' wives joining them in family accommodation, there will be a constant supply of people seeking to bring their families together by means of informal arrangements.

A word of caution is necessary here, however. Despite the clear differences in Table 5, the extent to which attitudes to the hostel as a place for migrants in the city are polarised is not as clear cut. We asked respondents to accept or disagree with a range of attitudinal items, one of which was

	Lodgers (n 63)	Shacks (n 100)	Temporary hostels (n 76)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 100)
Endorsement *"staying in a hostel is the best way of living in a city"*	36%	18%	19%	23%	43%

Firstly, it is clear that a minority, even among regular hostel-dwellers, would accept the constraints on freedom it imposes. Secondly, the lodger category appears to contain a major group of one-third who would live in a hostel if they could. Some are people who were in hostels previously but who had to leave for a variety of reasons.

Here again we see evidence of perceptions and problems shared by all categories of migrants; the differences in actual behaviour hide great similarities.

In giving reasons for wishing their wives to join them, respondents stressed loneliness, economy, the need for care and nursing when ill, the desire for a wife's income, need to participate in the upbringing of children and the basic human right to have husband and wife together. In other words there were both instrumental, sentimental

and political reasons given. The latter, this being emphasis on the basic human right, was most typical of older, better-educated and urban-oriented people, as one would expect.

From the results it is fairly obvious that the importance attached to the marital separation factor in the debate on migrant labour has been justified. From results already discussed earlier it would appear that some 56 percent of our respondents who are separated from their wives claim to be unhappy about it, even in response to a question that was deliberately designed to bias the answers slightly in the other direction.

Taking the declaration of unhappiness as one indication of migrant worker stress in what appears to be a significant domain of their lives, it is important to identify the groups which experience this unhappiness more than average:

Unhappy about separation from wife:

		N
Sample average	56%	345
South Sothos	71%	14
Pedi	66%	15
Std. 8 +	75%	20
Witwatersrand migrants	62%	205
White-collar workers	66%	20
Ex white farm	60%	63
Shared land or expectation	64%	48
Compound or hostel residents	63%	157
City home	82%	34

It is clear that the most stressed migrants in terms of family separation are those whose future in the rural areas is uncertain and who therefore wish to gain a firmer foothold in the urban areas. In terms of our survey categories migrants most at risk are hostel residents. By contrast, judging by survey results, the respondents in the survey who have brought their wives to live with them illegally appear to have resolved this basic dimension of stress inherent in the migrant labour system.

3.6 Stress Factors: Anxiety and Demoralisation.

In reporting above we have given an overview of some of the "push" factors which force migrants to become permanent target workers and the cross-pressures to which contract workers are exposed whilst in town. In particular, we have seen that large proportions of our sample have reacted strongly to enforced separation of families in the migrant labour system in order to resolve tension in at least one sphere of life.

In this section we shall identify further stress factors in the lives of migrants and see how migrants cope with such factors.

3.6.1 Anxieties.

A subsample of survey respondents were presented with a list of stressful situations and asked if any of the items on the list had given them cause for worry during the previous year.

The responses to this question are summarised in Table 6.

Broadly speaking, it is evident that non-conforming and regular migrants alike experience high levels of anxiety and suffer from similar stress factors. Anxiety revolves mainly around material survival and subsistence and concern for the family at home. By contrast, social interaction and misfortunes arising from these tend to play a less prominent role in producing anxiety. These results suggest that constraints arising from the migrant labour situation which are by and large beyond the migrant's control create a web of cross-pressures. In other areas over which the migrant has greater control, the proportion of the sample reporting anxiety is significantly smaller.

It is particularly noteworthy that very low proportions of the sample report being anxious about their performance at work. This finding suggests that whilst some migrants are anxious about job opportunities and word rewards, they are tendentially more confident in their actual work role.

TABLE 6. Respondents who worried very much during the past year by type of anxiety [1)]

Anxiety re:	Lodgers (n 62)	Shack (n 103)	Temporary hostels (n 74)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 98)
Not sending enough money home	74	67	74	71	77
Savings	64	76	68	70	61
Debt repayment	74	65	70	69	63
Insufficient wage increases	67	72	59	67	71
Insufficient food at home	64	64	70	66	68
Theft of wage packet	71	68	55	64	61
Notified late if person ill at home	56	64	66	62	64
Ill health of wife/children	56	58	64	59	64
Work permit not renewed	59	66	48	59	56
Losing job	66	56	51	57	57
Theft while at work	51	54	64	56	58
Residential insecurity	61	60	41	46	54
Arriving late for work	62	43	51	51	33
Failing health and earnings	51	52	45	50	48
Crop failure	53	41	50	47	39
Witchcraft	45	43	52	46	45
Loss of cattle	53	36	44	43	36
Accidents at work	50	35	39	40	42
Rural property mismanaged	45	39	32	38	38
Unfaithful wife	40	28	37	34	37
Arrested for offence	33	33	31	32	40
Disputes at work	32	31	31	31	29
Cheated by friends	32	25	36	30	28
Performing poorly on the job	29	31	25	28	36
Supervisor displeased with job performance	35	21	18	25	24
Girlfriend causing trouble	21	20	17	19	14
Overall average	52	48	48	48	48

A closer examination of the figures in Table 6 reveals that to a certain degree the specific types of anxieties experienced depend largely on circumstantial factors. For example, shack migrants are more concerned than others about their ability to save for the future, most probably a reflection of their employment situation. Lodgers appear

1) The question read: *"Everybody worries about things in their lives, but some things are more worrying than others. What do you worry about most? I'm going to read to you some things and I'd like you to tell me if you worried very much or just a little or not at all about these things in your life during the past year?"* For the sake of brevity the actual wording of the items has been paraphrased above.

to be significantly more anxious than all other groups in a variety of situations, including fear of losing job or accommodation, being late for work, accidents at work, and cattle dying. It is probable that lodgers belong to a group which is at high risk mainly because as mentioned earlier, they have achieved relatively higher levels of success and may be fearful of losing the rewards of hard work.

Which other high-risk groups can be identified in our sample? Some indications are given in the list below which does not claim to be exhaustive, but gives a general picture of anxiety among migrants. Only situations which were considered to be worrisome by forty percent of the sample are included.

According to these results anxiety levels are particularly high among the more senior types of migrant, and those whose situation in the urban and/or the rural economy is precarious, for example the unemployed, and persons whose rural means of subsistence has been removed (this may apply to the Xhosa Ciskei and the ex white farm migrants). Our data suggest that all groups of migrants experience some anxiety, but that the migrants who are caught up in the cross-pressures created by the migrant labour system are particularly at risk. It is also highly probable that conflicting demands affect older migrants, who have many responsibilities to family and kin, to a greater extent than others.

	Remittances	Savings	Debts	Wage increases	Food at home	Theft of wages	Late notification	Ill health wife	Work permit	Losing job	Theft	Residential insecurity	Late for work	Failing health	Crop failure	Witchcraft	Loss of cattle	Accidents at work
Sample average	73	68	67	68	66	63	63	61	58	57	57	52	46	49	45	46	41	40
Above average anxiety:																		
35-44 years	79							72										
45 + years		77		78			75	80					60	62	57	55	55	50
Worked 10 years in town								73					56		55		50	
Xhosa Ciskei	79	82	87	76		82						69						
Xhosa Transkei	80												55		56	56	56	
Cape migrants																50	50	
Durban migrants		84		76	76				69									
Pretoria migrants							77						63	66				
Std. 3 - 5 education	80				75													
Std. 6 - 7					75									62				
White-collar workers*	80	80	90								70							
Unemployed			76				74		68	66	66	62			60	52	52	52
Ex white farm		82		79		74						65		63				
Share land or expectations									67		76							
Own land																	50	
Family nearby			79						66			61						
Earn R200+ p.m.						74						62	59					

* very small subsample n = 10

3.6.2 Demoralisation.

We have seen that both residentially non-conforming and conforming migrants are prone to worry about a number of urban and rural-based concerns. In some instances the non-conformers by virtue of their seniority and precarious housing and employment status appeared to be more at risk than others.

In this section we shall review the more immediate signs of maladjustment among our respondents as indicated by signs of stress and demoralisation. Morale is undoubtedly affected by environmental and situational factors, so one might expect high levels of morale in those instances where non-conformity with the regulations of migrancy have resulted in the resolution of typical migrant problems such as separation from one's family. By the same token, attempts to resolve gaps between aspirations and achievements along non-conforming lines may cause new forms of stress, such as those related to the illegal status which the solution may bring with it.

In order to obtain a measure of the level of morale among our respondents, we asked them about their feeling states in a variety of critical situations. The results of this inquiry are given in Table 7.

It would appear that as a group the non-conformists exhibit higher stress than the regular migrants. On five of the ten indicators of stress non-conforming migrants gave higher self-ratings than the regular migrants and similar ratings on the remainder of the items. These findings suggest that despite their attempts to break with the system as regards domicile, the non-conforming migrants still suffer stress reactions.

TABLE 7. Demoralisation.[1)]

Feels like the following very often:	Lodgers (n 63)	Shack (n 100)	Temporary hostels (n 76)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 100)
Never has enough time at home to rest	34%	42%	42%	40%	28%
Gets angry easily if has to wait	30	41	28	34	34
Has headaches and body pains	30	27	32	29	21
Has no chances to plan life or future	27	29	29	28	32
Is tired at work in the morning even after a lot of sleep	22	25	32	26	14
Cannot reach goals no matter how hard he tries	27	30	19	25	24
Most people he knows wish him harm	27	26	22	25	13
Is a completely worthless person	20	25	21	22	16
Has nothing enjoyable or worth making the effort to do	22	24	19	22	17
Is weak and unimportant	23	24	14	20	11
Average percentage 'demoralised' on ten indicators	26	29	26	27	21

Other survey categories in which feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and hopelessness are particularly pervasive are the Cape migrants with above average proportions expressing demoralisation on 7 out of 10 indicators and the Ciskei Xhosas with 5 out of 10 above average indicator scores.

To sum up, these findings reveal remarkably high levels of stress in the non-acquiescent group; stress which is not in any way related to the inadequacy of the rural resource base. These results are highly suggestive that the stress factors influencing demoralisation among contract workers may be generated within the migrant system itself. It is to this point that we turn in the next section.

---

1) The question read: *"Tell me whether you feel like the following very often, sometimes, or hardly ever or never?"*

3.7 Reactions to the situation: political consciousness among migrants.

The migrant contract worker in South Africa has seldom been viewed in terms of potential political action. Unlike the largely urban-oriented black trade unions, the better-educated black urban intelligentsia, or the highly politicised black student and scholar population of South Africa, the migrant contract worker as a social category is largely voiceless. It is true that the migrant contract worker element is very active in Inkatha, the KwaZulu-Natal based political mobilisation organisation, but they are one category among many different support groups in that organisation.

Given the stresses to which the migrant contract worker is exposed it is absolutely vital that his political consciousness be assessed. Given the relative powerlessness of the migrant's situation, the generally low level of education and the consequent isolation from the politicising media, one should not expect an overt political consciousness of the intensity which one finds in the emergent urban black middle classes. Different benchmarks have to be applied.

3.7.1 Perceptions of the Influx Control System.

The rights and the rightlessness of the migrant contract workers are determined almost totally by the legal prescriptions of Influx Control laws and the regulations and procedures which flow from them. The assumptions underlying these laws is that the would-be contract worker is a "foreigner" to the industrial core of South Africa, whose movements and access to work can be regulated much as immigration controls operate on foreign workers in any labour-importing country. How do the migrants themselves perceive these controls?

We asked the migrant workers to give examples of how the influx control regulations and laws had hindered them and helped them.[1)]

Certain proportions could give no examples of how influx control had hindered them, as follows:

---

1) The question read: *"Thinking of influx control regulations - passes and permits to work - could you give me some examples of how these regulations have a) hindered you and b) helped you?"*

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
No examples of being hindered by "pass" laws	16%	19%	30%	22%	32%

These proportions are fairly high, but, then again, any law or statute which actively constrains everyone in a society would be totally unworkable. Clearly, however, the groups which have deviated from the residential expectations are most likely to be blocked or impeded by such laws.

The more detailed effects of influx control in the lives of these migrants can be seen in the following Table.

TABLE 8. Percentage mentions of different kinds of effects of Influx Control in the lives of contract workers.

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Prevented me from getting work	51%	47%	38%	45%	38%
Can't change jobs and improve myself	10	16	12	13	5
Am arrested for not carrying it	9	5	17	10	8
Always exposed to arrest	11	10	9	10	8
Stops my freedom of movement	6	6	10	7	11
Stops me living where I want	9	11	6	9	7
Takes away my rights	5	6	2	5	3
Must keep renewing my permit	5	5	2	4	4
Must always pay fines	8	1	6	4	1
Can't have business where I want	-	1	1	-	-

From the results in Table 8 it is once again clear that the non-conformist migrants are marginally more constrained by the influx controls than the regular hostel dwellers, but particularly as regards occupational freedom. The influx control laws, in theory, are supposed to match labour supply to demand. Yet, as we see in the Table six out of ten or more of the non-conforming migrants feel that the regulations actually prevent them from making best use of their proximity to employment opportunity.

This perception of pass laws as effectively limiting job opportunities and occupational mobility appears to be salient among less marginal groups of black workers as well. In a study conducted among black factory workers in Durban in 1982[1], the subjects were asked: *"What is most valuable for you - which of the following things would help you most?"* The highest single mention (56%) referred to *"freedom to seek work anywhere"*. It is remarkable that among these largely unionised workers faced with a relatively wide range of attractive and suggestive possibilities, the lifting or modification of influx control to allow for job mobility should feature above all other issues.

However, when questioned on the function of influx control only 18 percent of the sample of black factory workers described the intention of influx control as a political control or a means of placing blacks at a disadvantage. Eighty-two percent described the purpose of influx control in rather practical or bureaucratic terms, i.e. as a way of channelling labour, as a means of recording the identity of people, or as a means of controlling access to limited resources such as housing. Given the fact that the majority of nearly seven out of ten was unionised in this sample and the intensity of frustration, this reaction is remarkably forgiving. These factory workers appear, then, to give the system the benefit of the doubt. The motives of the legislators are seen as practical or bureaucratic without the intention to create hardship.

Returning to our migrant sample, the proportions of negative interpretations of influx control legislation among the migrant groups was considerably higher, most probably a reflection of direct experience of constraints in one's movements. We asked an open question: *"What are all the reasons for having pass laws (influx control) in South Africa? What are such laws intended to achieve?* (full probe)". After all the responses had bee

---

1) The study covered a sample of 532 factory workers in a range of companies which had experienced problems during the pensions strikes, but included a control group from a wide range of unaffected factories.

classified into categories, it appeared that one-quarter to one-third of our sample had negative views of influx control. This group sees the legal control system as discriminatory, an infringement of rights to freedom of movement and a tool for the manipulation and exploitation of blacks by whites.

The groups with negative perceptions of influx control are distributed as follows:

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
Negative views of Influx Control (as opposed to neutral views with a few positive responses)	34%	27%	42%	33%	25%

An interesting category here is the people in hostels who wish to find other accommodation. They are clearly the people who are less prepared than the conforming hostel-dwellers to accept the system, yet they have not yet been able to successfully "work" the informal system to establish themselves in more compatible circumstances as is the case with lodgers and shack-dwellers.

Negative reactions to the "pass" laws are more strongly represented than average in the following categories: (overall average 31%) - Durban migrants 47%, white-collar workers 45%, partial access to land (shared land) 47%, urban identification 39%, ANC supporters 54%, critically discontented with life in South Africa 45%, and with job circumstances 44%.

It is interesting that people with uncertain land resources (rather than those who are clearly without land) should experience the constraints of the system so clearly. One would expect Durban migrants, with their decade-long history of labour activism to object to the "pass" laws more than other groups. The other variables which correlate with negative reactions are quite clearly in the category of political discontent, hence identifying very definitely the potential

political significance of influx control constraints.

3.7.2 Political Consciousness.

This brings us to the critical issue of the political consciousness of migrants. A technique involving five faces with differing expressions but with descriptive labels read out carefully to respondents, enabled us to assess the broad extent of political dissatisfaction with *"life in South Africa"* among our migrant contract workers. This technique was identical to that used in certain keynote studies in the past.[1] The results are not strictly comparable to these earlier studies because the context of the present interviews was less "political" than those of the earlier studies referred to, hence the more overt encouragement to give "political" responses was less in the current study.

In the interests of brevity we select only the final response category for analysis here — this being the facial expression and description denoting *"anger and impatience"* with life in South Africa.

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
"Angry and impatient with life in South Africa"[2]	43%	31%	36%	36%	25%

An instrument like the one used does not necessarily provide a reliable assessment of political discontent in absolute terms — the context of the interview can influence responses, as we have indicated. However, the comparisons between groups are meaningful. It appears clearly from the results above that the residentially non-conforming migrants are more generally discontented than the conforming hostel-dwellers. The greatest frustration lies among the township lodgers and

---

1) Theodor Hanf *et.al. South Africa: the Prospects for Peaceful Change*, London, Rex Collings, 1981; and *Buthelezi Commission, Vol. 6, The Report on the Attitude Surveys*, Durban, Inkatha Institute, 1982.

2) The question read: *"Here is a picture of how African people like you can feel about life for Africans in South Africa."* (Subjects handed card with faces.) *"Which face shows how African people like you feel about life in South Africa now?"*

the hostel-dwellers seeking alternatives. The shack-dwellers appear to have resolved their problems to a greater extent.

As we might expect it is the older migrants of 45 years and over (43%), those who have worked in town for over 10 years (40%), and those who are better educated (44%) who are most discontented. People who are unemployed (40%) and Cape Town migrants (41%) are also above average in their degree of discontentment.

The same basic technique was used to assess consciousness in more specific domains of living.[1)]

	Lodgers	Shacks	Temporary hostels	Total	Controls
"Angry and impatient with conditions/opportunities in rural areas"	31%	26%	34%	30%	16%
"Angry and impatient with job situation"	33	31	42	35	21
"Angry and impatient with pass laws"	60	46	57	53	49
"Angry and impatient with political situation"	47	37	36	40	38

The keynote significance of the constraints imposed by Influx Control in the lives of these men appears clearly here. Also, it is clear that the conformist hostel-dwellers are generally least discontented, as other results show. Migrant "squatters" appear, once again, to have obtained some resolution of their difficulties. It is among the lodgers and the restless hostel-dwellers that problems seem to occur which produce a heightened political consciousness.

A detailed analysis of our cross-tabulated results; which we will not present for reasons of brevity, shows here again that the older, more senior, educationally and occupationally mobile groups, the groups with specific frustrations (Cape Town migrants, unemployed, poorly paid people) and those whose wish to identify with the city is blocked are the groups revealing above-average degrees of discontent.

What is perhaps most significant are the inter-correlations of

---

1) The questions read: *"Here is a picture of how African people like you can feel about life for Africans in South Africa. Which face shows how African people like you feel: about the conditions and opportunities which people have in their rural home areas? About pass laws? About the political situation in South Africa?"*

the indices presented above. Overall life satisfaction is fairly highly correlated with job satisfaction and satisfaction with rural circumstances, and both domain satisfactions seem to be bipolar in their effects —— i.e. they do relate to positive life satisfaction. "Pass" laws and the political situation, on the other hand, appear to relate to dissatisfaction.

The close association between black frustrations and influx control, particularly migrant workers, is well-documented. For example, in the attitude study conducted for the Buthelezi Commission 79 percent of the Transvaal migrants interviewed stated the abolition of the pass laws as the foremost type of reform which would improve their lives.[1] By contrast the comparative percentages for Witwatersrand township dwellers and all Natal/KwaZulu blacks in the survey were only 59 percent and 44 percent, respectively. In another item presented earlier in the same interview, the black subjects were asked which two things they would wish the government to change, this time being allowed to answer spontaneously. Among migrant workers, the proportion mentioning pass laws was 60 percent. (By comparison, only some 33% of the Witwatersrand township respondents and 21% of the people in Natal/KwaZulu mentioned pass laws.)

Similar results were obtained in two earlier studies undertaken in 1979 involving small samples of 150 Durban Zulus and 75 Witwatersrand Pedis. Subjects were asked to rate, in points out of 10, the desirability of a variety of possible reforms. The item "no more pass laws" was given the third-highest rating of 9,1 and 9,2 points by the two samples, respectively.

In their very nature pass laws cannot produce positive

---

1) The question read: *"If the government were to ask people like you about improving the lives of Africans today, what should it do first, and after that?* (etc.)".... Ten options were presented. The sample included 100 Transvaal migrant workers.

effects on consciousness since they operate only in a negative direction. Positive "freedoms" or "opportunities" in the legal-political situation are simply not possible at the present time in the perceptions of the majority of black people. Given the realities of the policy situation at the moment, and given the fact that "pass" laws can hardly be "improved", only removed, it seems fairly clear that the main routes to an improvement in the political consciousness and stability of the migrant labour force are job-advancement and improvements in the rural resource base.

We would like to add immediately, however, that the relatively less discontented situation of the shack-dwellers among the non-conformists points to the advantages of allowing "zones of freedom" in which migrant workers can make their basic life arrangements informally to the pattern of their choice.

3.7.3 Political Activism

Political consciousness does not necessarily imply the kind of consciousness which is a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for political activism. A different kind of measure is required. Needless to say, indices of political activism are not easy to introduce in focussed interview research. Obviously behavioural measures are far more valid and appropriate. Nevertheless, some approximate indication of the attitudinal tendency towards political activism can be obtained with appropriate items. We attempted to include such items in the present study.

TABLE 9. Attitudinal Support for Labour Action.

"If a well respected leader of black people wished to show his strength to the South African Government and he were to let it be known that workers should stay away from work for 2 weeks, would people like yourself ..."

	Lodgers (n 125)	Shacks (n 203)	Temporary hostels (n 150)	Total (n 478)	Controls (n 198)
"All stay away	23%	16%	30%	22%	24%
almost all stay away	18	16	17	17	14
only some stay away	12	19	20	18	15
very few or none stay away"	45	46	30	41	45

This item was followed with a probe into reasons:

reasons for obeying	(n 52)	(n 67)	(n 72)	(n 191)	(n 77)
Trust in requests of leaders	44	41	44	43	44
Will make Government reconsider rights	50	23	31	34	25
Most blacks dissatisfied with situation	13	25	20	20	10
Will cause unity among workers	5	11	13	10	6
reasons for disobeying	(n 73)	(n 134)	(n 76)	(n 283)	(n 121)
Fear of losing job	45	50	60	51	50
Fear of starving	39	29	21	29	36
Leader can't help materially	19	20	21	20	24
Fear of losing pay	23	15	22	19	13
Blacks lack unity	9	6	19	10	2
Most blacks dislike disobeying Government	5	8	7	7	7

The results in Table 9 are revealing. An identical question asked of all black people in KwaZulu-Natal yielded 20 percent indicating that "all or almost all" workers would obey a call for a strike. Our results here indicate almost twice the attitudinal tendency toward labour action in our migrants. This consciousness is particularly developed among the restless hostel-dwellers. From the reasons it appears that the negative response arises mainly from fear, not conviction.

Another item on the same topic, that of labour action is

presented, along with results, in Table 10.

TABLE 10. Perceptions of Likelihood of Labour Action.

"In 1973 and 1974 there were many strikes and demonstrations in Natal, and many thousands of black workers stayed away from work together. Do you think this could happen again?"

	Lodgers (n 62)	Shacks (n 103)	Temporary hostels (n 74)	Total (n 239)	Controls (n 98)
Will happen again	47%	45%	45%	45%	48%
Will not happen again	48	46	53	49	49
Uncertain	5	9	1	5	3

Circumstances to prevent this happening (among those predicting action)

More money	52%
Equal wages	25
Freedom of movement	17
Grievances dealt with	15
Better/more job opportunities	14
Treated with respect	10
Better living conditions	10
Equal rights	9
Equal education	8
Better working conditions	6

(n = 155)

Surprisingly high proportions of all migrants predict the probability of a mass-strike. Here there are no differences between our basic categories, perhaps because the question did not relate to personal intentions.

A very stringent item was the following, presented below with results:

	Lodgers (n 63)	Shacks (n 100)	Temporary hostels (n 76)	Controls (n 100)
"It is best for African people to be careful in politics and not risk getting into trouble and losing what they have"				
Percentage disagreement	27%	29%	47%	36%

An identical question was asked in the research for the Buthelezi Commission. Among equivalent groups, between 30 and 33 percent disagreed with the statement. Given that it is difficult to disagree with so positively worded a statement, the very high figure of 47 percent "activists" among the restless hostel-dwellers is very significant. Clearly there are signs of a political reaction to the system of constraints emerging in this group.

3.7.4 Images of the Employer.

Given the situation of stress and the manifest political reactions among migrants, the work situation is potentially one of the very few areas within which migrants can achieve satisfaction. The importance of job satisfaction in its correlation with overall life satisfaction has been noted. It is important to consider the following results within this context. In Table 11 we present results bearing upon the image of the industrial employer and of industry.

By and large, the results in Table 11 suggest that white employers tend to be seen in very negative terms. Admittedly, the importance of job-creation and job-opportunities is freely recognised, but even more so are a range of negative characteristics. What seems particularly striking is that the industrial employer seems to be viewed as part of the white system of administration.

Although no strictly comparable results are available, the results suggest a much more negative image of employment among migrants than among urban Africans generally.[1)]

---

1) See *Buthelezi Commission, Vol. 6. Op.cit.*

Table 11. Images of Industrial Employment.

"Which of the following is true of most owners of factories and work-places where people like you work?"

Most owners:	Lodgers (n 125)	Shacks (n 203)	Temporary hostels (n 150)	Total (n 478)	Controls (n 198)
Favour Coloureds and Indians over Africans	93%	95%	95%	94%	94%
Try to get as much work out of blacks for the smallest amount of pay	93	88	91	90	91
Run to the police whenever there is a dispute	86	90	89	89	94
Always try to replace black workers with machines	78	87	79	82	84
Do not give black employees a chance to show their ability	82	81	82	82	85
Work with and support the government	66	74	81	74	86
Do not care about blacks	70	81	65	73	72
Help black people by providing work	70	62	72	67	75
Try to pay as much as they can to workers without losing money	50	24	43	37	40
Try to help blacks by appealing to the government	6	8	12	9	14

4. SOME CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS OF POLICY.

Since many of the more detailed generalisations have already been made in the body of this paper we will be very brief in drawing certain major conclusions.

Residentially non-conformist migrants are not clearly differentiated from regular hostel-dwellers in terms of identification with the city. The "innovating" contract workers who arrange their own urban domicile generally tend not to be a group which is dominantly mobilising to gain permanent access to the urban system. Rather, they seem to be migrants who have taken steps to augment their comforts and residential

convenience while in the city without necessarily disposing of their rural connections or identification. The migrant shack-dwellers, however, are somewhat distinctive in the extent to which they have become urban-oriented.

What is perhaps most significant about the innovating migrants is their rejection, either in behaviour or expressed attitudes, of the family and domestic fragmentation which the formal migrant system brings about. Quite clearly the non-conforming migrant is in large measure a person who acts "illegally" to normalise his domestic situation while in town.

There is distinct evidence to suggest that the levels of anxiety are high among all migrants irrespective of residential circumstances. There are also indications in our results that morale is low in all groups but lowest in the non-conforming categories.

The informal arrangements for urban residence outside the conventional hostel situation are not sufficient for some categories of migrants who appear to need and want opportunities for permanent urbanisation. These are particularly people with insufficient land resources and without a sheet-anchor of security in rural areas. Furthermore, migrants who have made some occupational progress also appear to develop an urban commitment. Both these trends indicate that the proportions of migrants "maladapted" to the conventional system will grow steadily over time.

The evidence on political consciousness and potential activism indicates that the non-conforming migrant tends to be more discontented and generally aggrieved than his conforming counterpart. This applies particularly to lodgers in the townships and to those in hostels seeking escape from their artificial life-situation. While there is certainly a great deal of ambivalence in political attitudes — the "pass laws" are viewed by a majority as inevitable — we have also found evidence of activist attitudes. The highly constrained non-conforming migrants yield evidence of potential activism which is above a comparable population mean.

Views on the job situation are also ambivalent. A job in the city is the most highly-valued attainment, and it probably contributes

very greatly to life satisfaction. However, at the same time, white management has a poor image among these generally low-level workers, and is seen as part and parcel of white power hegemony.

Some implications stand out very clearly:

1) Strains in the migrant labour system must increase over time.
2) A majority in all migrant groups is still rurally oriented. Since a lack of rural security leads to confusion as regards rural or urban identification, the people so affected need to be assisted either in urban, peri-urban or rural areas to achieve a firm basic identification. Closer-settlement rural development schemes strategically situated relative to transportation routes to employment would serve the rurally-oriented landless people best. This type of development is urgent.
3) Among all migrant groups the pass laws are the most salient factor which is also associated with discontent and frustration. These reactions are particularly due to a perception among migrant workers that the pass laws impede job-advancement and prevent making the best of work opportunities. Despite the intensity of frustrations generated by these laws, the most common black perception of them is apolitical at this stage. The pass laws appear to be seen as part of a web of bureaucratic controls on black lives which are so pervasive that they have become part of the taken-for-granted reality of the situation. However, this study as well as earlier research has also shown that an association exists between a rejection of the pass laws and a heightened political consciousness. It must be assumed that these laws are part of a mix of factors inducing radical politicisation. The politicised perception of the pass laws is a minority phenomenon at the moment but as it is associated with increasing education and rural landlessness it is likely to increase dramatically as time goes on.

4) The "mobilising" migrant who wishes to pursue an urban career and life-style is a category which is particularly vulnerable to demoralisation and stress. Unless the system of influx control becomes more flexible to permit these people to go through normal processes of urbanisation, the preconditions for labour and political instability will be fostered. In particular it is essential that some mechanism exist, possibly through employers to make application for a change in status allowing migrants to acquire urban rights.

5) Formal alternatives to hostel accommodation, with provision for family residence, albeit temporary if necessary, are essential. The restless and frustrated hostel-dwellers seeking alternative domestic situations in town emerge as a category with a large potential for demoralisation or political and labour activism. There is simply no alternative but to start encouraging the establishment of family accommodation for migrants in the cities.

6) Among the non-conforming migrants, the shack-dwellers point the way to a solution. However offensive the "squatter" situation may be to orderly bureaucrats, the informal shack-dwellers have to some degree solved their own problems and the edge of political discontent has been bluntened. Informal housing settlements have to be accepted — even in the common area, be provided with basic services, and be made subject to a desirable minimum level of control and supervision.

7) Very broadly, the migrant contract labour force is diversifying rapidly. This requires a flexibility and a range of different solutions. Insistence on the hostel compound as the dominant formal pattern will simply create increasing maladaptation with serious effects on labour productivity, stability and even political order.

8) Finally it must be noted that most migrant contract workers are still committed to their rural home situations and intend to return. If the system of influx control is allowed to become more flexible it will not lead to a vast flood of applications for permanent urban status. Flexibility in the regulations is likely simply to start relieving the stresses which exist for a "maladapted" minority for whom the rural pull factors have become very weak.

APPENDIX I.

Sample Characteristics.

Interviews were conducted in the Witwatersrand (348), Cape (225), Pretoria (52) and Durban (51) areas with migrants living in townships (125), in squatter settlements (203) and in hostels though desiring alternative accommodation (150). The control group of 'regular' migrants accounted for 198 interviews.
Further breakdowns of the sample are as follows:

Language groups:	
Transkei Xhosas	242
Ciskei Xhosas	95
Zulus	173
Pedi	42
Southern Sothos	30
Tswana	13
Other	81
	676

Age:	
18-24 years	133
25-34 years	268
35-44 years	168
45-54 years	71
55+ years	36
	676

Employment:	
Employed	572
Unemployed	104
	676

Residential circumstances:	Residentially 'non-conforming' group	Control group
Compound/hostel room	150	118
Township - lodger	124	32
Shack settlement - house	63	
Shack settlement - lodgings	138	
White suburbs	2	47
Other	1	1
	478	198